

Article - Exercise for a healthy dog

What does it take to keep your favorite dog healthy? According to Healthy Pet Solutions, daily exercise ranks right up there with a good diet and regular vet visits in maintaining canine health.

Dogs need exercise for physical well being, but also to keep their minds healthy. Regular exercise will do as much physically for your dog as it does for you. You can expect to see improvements in his muscle tone, a stronger cardiovascular system and bones, and a more trim physique. Dogs become more limber, more agile and more alert.

Regular exercise also helps to decrease doggie boredom and to strengthen your relationship with your canine companion. A good dose of exercise will reduce bad behaviors like digging, excessive barking or unwanted chewing. As the saying goes, a tired dog is a well behaved dog.

Before starting any vigorous exercise routine, Healthy Pet Solutions recommends that dogs know basic commands to sit, stay, and heel. Make a visit to the vet. Then, create the exercise routine that works for your dog. How much is enough? Some dogs may tire with a 15-minute walk a couple of times a day; other dogs might need to be active for a half hour or more at a time. Dogs left alone for long periods of time during the day may need intensive interaction with their humans morning and evening.

Age and breed come into play in selecting appropriate exercise too. Short nosed breeds like pugs or bulldogs may be unable to handle long strenuous exercise sessions. Sustained running may be harmful to the joints of puppies or large breeds.

Exercise regimes may change as a dog moves from puppy to active adolescent to older dog. An older dog might still want to keep pace with you at exercise levels that could be harmful. A wise dog owner will continually monitor the effect of exercise on his dog and make changes as needed.

So what makes a good exercise routine? Keys include activities that allow you to maintain control, starting with a warm up activity before jumping into strenuous runs, and variety, variety, variety.

Just as you can get bored doing the same exercises over and over each day, your dog will get bored with a walk along the same path at the same time each day, Erik Johnson of Healthy Pet Solutions notes. Changing the route or adding a workout

with a ball or frisbee will keep him interested and mentally alert. Other ideas for making exercise fun for your pet include: Vary the pace if your dog knows how to heel, try random bursts of speed walking during your stroll. A leashed dog might accompany you on a jog one day, a gentle stroll the next.

Put your dog to work let her carry a basket or a toy. Larger breeds may be fitted with a backpack that allows them to carry their own treats and water for longer outings.

Get out the ball, dogs can learn to play soccer with a group or push a tennis ball with his nose around the patio or even the living room. A dog skilled at fetching can play outfielder while you use a bat or tennis racket to lob his special ball around a field but be careful not to set up competition for the ball between children and the dog.

Turn on the bubbles, most dogs love to chase the bubbles from those little bottles you can buy in toy departments of your local drug store. Refill with an even less expensive homemade mixture of one cup water to 4 tablespoons of liquid dish detergent.

For more tips on raising healthy dogs, see the Healthy Pet Solutions website at www.pet-helper.com or request info using the following contact information:

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